

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of providing one or more of sealing, baffling and structural reinforcement within a cavity of an article of manufacture, comprising:

- (a) providing a first member of the article of manufacture;
- (b) providing a second member of the article of manufacture;
- (c) providing a dynamic self-adjusting assembly including:
 - i) a carrier having a first member with a first surface and a second member with a first surface; and
 - ii) a first mass of expandable material adhered to the first surface of the first member of the carrier;
- (d) positioning the self-adjusting assembly adjacent to the first member of the article of manufacture automotive vehicle;
- (e) assembling the second member of the article of manufacture automotive vehicle to the first member of the article of manufacture automotive vehicle for forming a cavity; and
- (f) activating the first mass of expandable material wherein, upon activation of the first mass of expandable material, the first mass of expandable material and the first member of the carrier rotates relative to the second member of the carrier assembly.

Claim 2 (currently amended): A method as in claim 1 wherein the first mass of expandable material is applied to the first member of the carrier assembly with a mini-applicator.

Claim 3 (original): A method as in claim 1 wherein activating the first mass of expandable material is accomplished by exposing the first mass to an elevated temperature in an e-coat or paint operation.

Claim 4 (currently amended): A method as in claim 1 wherein the second member of the carrier assembly includes at least one fastening member for attaching the assembly to the first member of the article of manufacture.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A method as in claim 1 wherein the second member of the carrier assembly is shaped to correspond to the first member of the article of manufacture and the first member of the carrier assembly is shaped to correspond to the second member of the article of manufacture.

Claim 6 (original): A method as in claim 1 wherein the second member of the article of manufacture is moved laterally relative to the first member of the article of manufacture during assembly of the second member of the article of manufacture to the first member of the article of manufacture.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A method as in claim 1 further comprising a second mass of expandable material attached to the second member of the carrier wherein the first mass of expandable material and the second mass of expandable material are substantially coplanar relative to each other after rotation of the first mass of expandable material.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A method as in claim 1 wherein the first mass of expandable material is epoxy based and the first and second members of the carrier assembly are formed of polymeric material.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A method of providing baffling within a cavity of an automotive vehicle, comprising:

- (a) providing a first member of the automotive vehicle;
- (b) providing a second member of the automotive vehicle;
- (c) providing a dynamic self-adjusting assembly including:
 - i) a carrier having a first member with a first surface and a second member with a first surface, said second member of the carrier hingedly attached to the first member of the carrier;
 - ii) a first mass of expandable material adhered to the first surface of the first member of the carrier;

- iii) a second mass of expandable material adhered to the first surface of the second member of the carrier; and
- iv) a connector member having a first end at least partially disposed within said first mass and a second end at least partially disposed within said second mass;

(d) attaching the self-adjusting assembly to the first member of the automotive vehicle;

(e) assembling the second member of the automotive vehicle to the first member of the automotive vehicle for forming a cavity; and

(f) activating at least one of the first mass of expandable material or the second mass of expandable material thereby at least partially releasing the connector member such that the first mass and first member of the carrier assembly rotate relative to the second mass and second member of the carrier assembly thereby allowing the first and second masses of expandable material to more fully traverse a cross-sectional area of the cavity.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A method as in claim 9 wherein the first mass of expandable material is applied to the first member of the carrier assembly with a mini-applicator.

Claim 11 (original): A method as in claim 9 wherein activating the first mass of expandable material is accomplished by exposing the first mass to an elevated temperature in an e-coat or paint operation.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A method as in claim 9 wherein the second member of the carrier assembly includes at least one fastening member for attaching the assembly to the first member of the automotive vehicle.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A method as in claim 9 wherein the second member of the carrier assembly is shaped to correspond to the first member of the automotive vehicle and the first member of the carrier assembly is shaped to correspond to the second member of the automotive vehicle.

Claim 14 (original): A method as in claim 9 wherein the second member of the automotive vehicle is moved laterally relative to the first member of the automotive vehicle during assembly of the second member of the automotive vehicle to the first member of the automotive vehicle.

Claim 15 (currently amended): A method as in claim 9 wherein the first mass of expandable material and the second mass of expandable material are substantially coplanar relative to each other after rotation of the first member of the carrier assembly.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A method as in claim 9 wherein the first mass of expandable material is epoxy based and the first and second members of the carrier assembly are formed of polymeric material.

Claim 17 (currently amended): A method of providing baffling within a cavity of an automotive vehicle, comprising:

- (a) providing a first member of the automotive vehicle wherein the first member of the automotive vehicle is at least part of a rear quarter inner panel;
- (b) providing a second member of the automotive vehicle wherein the second member of the automotive vehicle is at least part of a rear body side outer panel;
- (c) providing a dynamic self-adjusting assembly including:
 - i) a carrier having a first member with a wall and a first surface and a second member with a wall and a first surface, said second member of the carrier hingedly attached to the first member of the carrier with a fastener;
 - ii) a first mass of expandable material adhered to the first surface of the first member of the carrier;
 - iii) a second mass of expandable material adhered to the first surface of the second member of the carrier; and

- iv) a connector member having a first end at least partially disposed within said first mass and a second end at least partially disposed within said second mass for maintaining the wall of the first member of the carrier cantilevered relative to the wall of the second member of the carrier thereby preventing rotation about the fastener;
- (d) attaching the self-adjusting assembly to the first member of the automotive vehicle;
- (e) assembling the second member of the automotive vehicle to the first member of the automotive vehicle for forming a cavity; and
- (f) exposing the first mass of expandable material to heat causing at least one of the first mass of expandable material or the second mass of expandable material to flow and expand such that the first mass of expandable material or the second mass of expandable material releases the connector member allowing the first mass and first member of the carrier assembly to rotate relative to the second mass and second member of the carrier assembly thereby allowing the first and second masses of expandable material to more fully traverse a cross-sectional area of the cavity.

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method as in claim 17 wherein the first mass of expandable material is applied to the first member of the carrier assembly with a mini-applicator.

Claim 19 (original): A method as in claim 17 wherein activating the first mass of expandable material is accomplished by exposing the first mass to an elevated temperature in an e-coat or paint operation

Claim 20 (currently amended): A method as in claim 17 wherein the second member of the carrier assembly includes at least one fastening member for attaching the assembly to the first member of the automotive vehicle.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A method as in claim 17 wherein the second member of the carrier assembly is shaped to correspond to the first member of the automotive vehicle and the first member of the carrier assembly is shaped to correspond to the second member of the automotive vehicle.

Claim 22 (original): A method as in claim 17 wherein the second member of the automotive vehicle is moved laterally relative to the first member of the automotive vehicle during assembly of the second member of the automotive vehicle to the first member of the automotive vehicle.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A method as in claim 17 wherein the first mass of expandable material and the second mass of expandable material are substantially coplanar relative to each other after rotation of the first member of the carrier assembly.